

Pan-Am. Hotel
Guatamala City.
Jan. 3rd., 1955

Dear Annette, Chris, Polly, Jay and Grandma:

Back from the wilds of Guatamala and straight to the Am. Embassy where I found many surprizes and long anticipated news from Home. I have never felt the true X' mas spirit or missed the family so much as this year. Tell P.C. and Jay they sure know what daddy needs on his field trips-and to Grandma, I must say the dates had a proffesional touch, the like of which has never been produced on the Bee production line. And to you, my dear senora, mucho gracias for the splendid way in which you have conducted the activities and X'mas for the children. It sounds like the last week has been an active one for all. Tell Chris that I did so enjoy her "I love you" notes and to Jay, that this is my lucky day, to-day, in Guatamala. I think that Santa made a very good choice in the presents this year.

In Guatamala the X'mas season seems to start earlier and last longer than in the States. It appears to me that there is more celebration the day after the occasion than on the proper day. I actually believe the people do not realize the exact date until someone starts the show. In the City, the occasion is much like in the States; but, outside in the wilds, the trend is different.

It is really unique the way these more primitive peoples improvise the natural elements into symbolical signs of X'mas. For instance, they actually pave the road with pine needles which is something new to me in decoration. Their decorations are more compactly arranged and more colorful in reds, greens and yellows. They use the fresh plants of the jungles and wilds, such as, orchids, poinsettas, colorful epiphytes or parasitic plants that are a mass of color and blooms and many other flowers of the forest. The long lines of decoration which we string ceilingward are made of pine needles and other plant material.

Candles which they excell in production, are the mellow sources of light. They can create X'mas trees from bare branches and commonly do so instead of using our conventional fir or spruce tree.

The Catholic Church which seems to be the dominant church in Guatamala is really enchanting to behold, especially on the inside where the candles are so arranged to give a most pleasing atmosphere of color and warmth. The condition that prostitutes the holliness of the day is the drunken natives, especially those individuals that are completely outlining the roads and sidewalks.